



ECONOMY REGENERATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday 16 JULY 2024

REPORT TITLE:	APPOINTMENT OF PANELS, STATUTORY / ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES 2024/25
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW AND CORPORATE SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to enable Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee to review the continuing need for various panels, statutory/ advisory Committees and working parties, and to appoint Members and named deputies to serve on those (including the statutory committees and panels) that are to be retained in 2024/25.

The Council Plan for 2023-2027 sets out the Councils vision to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services. This proposal directly supports the following key themes within that plan:

- A people focused regeneration.
- Safe, resilient and engaged communities.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough and is not a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATION

Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee is recommended to:

1. Authorise the Monitoring Officer as proper officer to carry out the wishes of the Group Leaders in allocating Members to membership of the Active Travel Member Working Group and to appoint those Members with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the names of such Members.
2. Give consideration to the proposal to appoint a cross party group of Members to conduct a policy development review in accordance with the approach outlined at appendix 1 of the report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

1.1 The work of the group will enable this Committee to make appropriate decisions and recommendations which will support the delivery of increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the emerging Local Plan and to support actions required to address the Climate Emergency and the target in the Cool2 Strategy to 'a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030.

1.1 The key drivers for refreshing policy development work at Committees is the move to a Whole Council Election Scheme in May 2023 and the new four-year Council Plan agreed by Council on 4th December 2023. The Council Plan provides an opportunity to establish a new way of strategically 'working together' across the organisation to deliver the Council Plan vision '*working together to promote fairness and opportunity for people and communities*' and the associated Council Plan enabling and delivery themes:

Enabling Theme:

- Working together to create a more efficient, effective and accessible Council.

Delivery Themes:

- Working together to improve early help for children and families.
- Working together to promote independence and healthier lives.
- Working together to deliver people-focused regeneration.
- Working together to protect our environment.
- Working together to create safe, resilient and engaged communities.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 This Committee could resolve to vary the numbers of Members or not appoint Members to it.

2.2 It is considered that the Active Travel Member Working Group Working Group will assist the Council in actively working to deliver ambitious inclusive walking and cycling projects as required to secure a positive outcome in delivering increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the emerging Local Plan and to support actions required to address the Climate Emergency and the target in the Cool2 Strategy to 'a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030'.

Policy Development

2.3 Potential options which the Committee could investigate, and potential consequences, include:

2.3.1 Not conducting policy development work. However, policy development work is clearly stated in the Council's Constitution and not conducting this type of work can be viewed by the sector as being indicative of wider governance and service failure issues (it is also considered good practice). Given the new Council Plan has now been approved, Members now have a clear strategic framework to conduct effective

policy development work. It is important as it engenders transparency and enables the Council to be accountable to residents. It can help the Council achieve best value; support further improvement and best practice; and enable locally adopted, enforceable recommendations and policies which deliver better outcomes for the wider community.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 The following is a body retained or created in 2024/25 to assist the Committee in its work, with the membership for 2024/25. The Terms of Reference are attached as Appendix 1.

Active Travel Member Working Group

3.2 A working group currently comprising 8 members tasked with securing a positive outcome in delivering increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the emerging Local Plan. This development of the Local Plan is also within the wider context of the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and the target in the Cool2 Strategy to 'a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030'.

3.3 The working group has an advisory role in the development of active travel schemes. The group will advise on the direction of active travel policy and delivery across Wirral. This is with a view to aiding greater understanding across the Council of issues associated with the implementation of active travel initiatives. The group will take account of the wider context of the potential for sustainable transport projects to contribute to:

- health and well-being;
- tackling the climate emergency and improving air quality;
- improving accessibility;
- reducing congestion by encouraging active travel modes especially for shorter journeys;
- achieving value for money;
- helping economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic;
- tackling transport poverty and inequality of access; and
- inclusive economic growth.

3.4 Policy Development Work

Purpose

3.4.1 The purpose of policy development work is to achieve positive outcomes for local people by undertaking a thorough, targeted examination of the council's service provision and procedures (or those services or activities carried out by external organisations which affect the Borough of Wirral or any of its inhabitants). However, it is not possible to examine every service or activity in detail, so it is important for the Policy and Service Committees to prioritise and plan its work programme for the

year to be taken forward through the committee, or a dedicated task and finish group.

Scope

3.4.2 The Council's Constitution (Part 4, Section 4) states that the Policy and Services Committees are to adopt policy development working practices when undertaking their functions to review the Council's actions or to review or otherwise scrutinise outside bodies and processes. The Policy and Services Committees may conduct policy development to:

- Review decisions made or actions taken by the Authority in so far as they have a direct impact on the role or functions of the Committee and the Committee can make recommendations to the relevant Committee on policies, budget and service delivery.
- Undertake reviews and make recommendations on services or activities carried out by external organisations which affect the Borough of Wirral or any of its inhabitants where this does not fall within the role or remit of another service committee or where it relates to cross cutting issues, including the review and monitoring of contractual and operational performance of shared service partnerships, joint ventures and outside organisations to which the Council makes a resource contribution, focusing on examination of the benefits of the Council's contribution and the extent to which the body concerned makes a contribution to the achievement of the Council's priorities as outlined in the Council Plan 2023 - 2027.

Process

3.4.3 A suggested process for determining and prioritising policy development topics is outlined at Appendix 1. This includes:

- **Identify potential issues –**
 - Consulting with all Members of Policy and Service Committees, Senior Leaders and Council Officers.
 - Looking at Wirral Council Plan priorities, Directorate Business Plans, the Forward Plan of the Council, as well as the MTFS.
 - Considering events and decisions in the Council's calendar that could require an input from scrutiny, such as setting budgets.
 - Reviewing the Council's risk register - analysis of risk registers on an ongoing basis will mean that scrutiny can understand what the impacts might be if risks are likely to occur, and what steps can be taken to mitigate.
 - Evaluating previous Council performance and identifying any follow-up work required to previous scrutiny work.
 - Carrying out work to engage with local people, for example through surgeries, local media, opinion surveys and online forums.
 - Reviewing customer complaints to identify any reoccurring themes.
- **Prioritise topics -** Identify and prioritise potential scrutiny topics, considering the resources they would require and the level of impact they could achieve.

- **Plan policy development and scrutiny work** - Decide which policy topics to review and include them in the work programme.
- **Review and evaluate** - Review progress and evaluate outcomes to demonstrate the value added.

3.4.4 For every item on the policy development work programme, it should be clear:

- What is the issue/activity/project under consideration?
- What would the Policy and Service Committee be asked to do?
- What are the reasons for/expected benefits of policy development in this area?
- Strategic considerations (aligned to the new Council Plan and underpinning strategic framework).
- Is there a specific deadline for the piece of work?

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The establishment of the Active Travel Working Group is in compliance with the Council's Constitution. This group will not take any decisions but inform the deliberations of this Committee.

5.2 The size of the Working Group is currently set at eight members. In addition, Members of other Committees may be invited to attend as and when appropriate at the discretion of the Chair of the Working Group.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report as the Working Group is arranged and serviced using existing staff resources.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 As the Active Travel Working Group is a non-statutory meeting, no risks have been identified from the recommendations.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 It is for political groups to decide how they wish to allocate their places on working groups.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

9.2 There are no equality implications arising directly from this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference for the Active Travel Member Working Group

Appendix 2 – Policy Development Timeline and Topic Selection Process

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Council's Constitution

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Economy Regeneration and Development Committee	20 June 2023
Economy Regeneration and Development Committee	13 June 2022
Economy Regeneration and Development Committee	8 June 2021
Economy Regeneration and Development Committee meeting of 4 March 2021 – Proposal to establish an Active Travel Working Group.	4 March 2021

